

so we can pass a stand-alone Zika funding bill that gives our country what it needs now, not this fall. We need to act before local transmission starts occurring in the continental United States. That is going to be soon. Late this fall will not do the trick. This fall is too late. It is time to act, not take a break. The Republican leader should not send the Senate out of session until we have done all we can to protect the American people from the threat of this horrible virus.

It doesn't take into consideration the other things we are just leaving: Flint, MI, opioids. There are so many things we are walking away from in this institution.

#### OBAMACARE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am so happy to have my friend talk about ObamaCare. I am happy to have him talk about that because he is making himself not look very good, and that is a gross understatement. Yesterday the Commonwealth Fund released its fourth survey of ObamaCare. Here is what they found: Since the enactment of the Affordable Care Act, 28 million people have gained coverage either through marketplaces or Medicaid. In the last 3 years, the number of uninsured Americans have been reduced by 13 million people. Those are 13 million more people who have insurance now than they had 3 years ago, and 82 percent of American adults enrolled in private plans or government coverage said they were satisfied with their plans.

Those numbers are further evidence the Affordable Care Act is helping the American people. It is getting people insured, many for the first time in their lives. Yesterday a woman came to me and said: Thank goodness. I—a diabetic—have been able to buy insurance because of ObamaCare.

It is giving families important subsidies so they can afford the plan they need, and it is providing options, allowing Americans to cater their health insurance plans to their needs. Much has been made recently about premiums. My friend has made a big deal about premiums, especially by Republicans looking for any opening to spread misinformation, falsehoods. They love to come and talk about ObamaCare, how horrible it is for the American people. Allow me to set the record straight again. At this point, we are all looking at proposed increases. This, of course, is preliminary information.

Let's consider Arkansas as an example. I picked Arkansas because one of the Senators from Arkansas is usually presiding, and I want him to hear this. Three out of the four companies that offer policies on Arkansas' health insurance marketplace proposed high premium increases for their enrollees. All of these increases were hikes of at least 10 percent. Fortunately, for the people of Arkansas, the Affordable Care Act helps. For starters, the vast major-

ity of enrollees in Arkansas are protected from premium increases. Why? Because ObamaCare tax credits actually cap health insurance premiums for 85 percent of consumers. In Arkansas, 87 percent of consumers receive tax credits that help make coverage affordable; 62 percent of Arkansas enrollees had the option to select plans as low as \$75 per month after tax credits. There are other ObamaCare provisions that safeguard against these rates that are out of line. Thanks to a provision within the law, State leaders have the resources to conduct a thorough review of the proposed rate increases. In Arkansas' case, the State received \$9.2 million to study proposed premium increases. Now it is up to Arkansas' Governor and insurance commissioner to do the job and examine their rate proposals. State leaders have until August 23 to approve final rates for the 2017 exchange plans.

The Arkansas insurance commissioner, Allen Kerr, already made it clear that he and the Governor are opposed to the hikes. Governor Hutchinson is a well known, fine man. I served with his brother and him in Congress. His brother was in the Senate.

Allen Kerr said:

Governor Hutchinson and I do not believe there is substantive justification for these rate increases. For that reason, we expect to take action to deny the requested rate increases until there is sufficient justification to properly consider any rate increase.

Before we passed the Affordable Care Act, Americans in the individual insurance market were hit with double-digit health premium increases every year without any exception. Back then, if the insurance company said you need to pay more, you either paid up or lost your insurance. Consumers had no recourse. And they were charged more because they had an illness the previous year. They were charged more for all kinds of reasons. And insurance companies could deny covering certain conditions all together—one is if you were a woman.

Now that Americans have ObamaCare in their corner, insurers can no longer charge more because you are sick or deny coverage to someone who has a certain illness. All conditions are covered, period. When insurance companies want premium increases, States have resources to fight back just like Arkansas, and when consumers decide that a plan is no longer working, they can—and should—shop around. In fact, everyone should do all they can to ensure that they are getting the best deal possible. That is what these marketplaces are for—to give the American people options.

The Republican leader should be embarrassed by what he said this morning. For all this misinformation said on the Senate floor almost every day, the truth can't be hidden: The Affordable Care Act is keeping Americans insured and providing them options to find health coverage that meets their needs.

I say to my friend the Republican leader, that is why today America has the lowest uninsured rate in the history of the country. The uninsured rate is at 9.1 percent. That is the lowest rate ever. The facts are undeniable. The Affordable Care Act is working.

Will the Chair announce the business of the day.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROUNDS). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 2943, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 469, S. 2943, a bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### WASTEFUL SPENDING

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I am back here for the 44th edition of "Waste of the Week." I am starting to enjoy this, and I hope someone else is, but what we don't enjoy is the fact that the government is wasting taxpayer money. We have been documenting this for 44 weeks now, and we have come up with a significant total that is approaching \$200 billion of waste.

People get up every morning, go to work—put in a hard-day's work if they have a job—try to save money so they can get the mortgage paid each month, get the insurance covered, get the gas tank filled up in the car, and hopefully save a little money for their kids' education. But every time they get a paycheck at the end of the week, they look at it and see deductions for this, that, and everything, such as State taxes, Federal taxes, sales taxes, excise taxes, such as the tax at the pump, and on and on it goes. You can't go to a grocery store, clothing store, or any retail store without getting a tax slapped on everything you buy. That money comes to Washington as a Federal tax, and at the very least, the taxpayer is due